

evident as we consider the facts connected with the birth of Christ. Notwithstanding the great mass of evidence furnished by the Old Testament, and the reliance of the Jews on the prophecies concerning Him, we find our Lord rejected by the great body of the people, and this, too, in the presence of the fact that His birth is made remarkable by many circumstances, all tending to recall to their mind all that had been written of Him from the beginning.

Mary and Joseph pay Him the first homage, angels announce His birth, and proclaim His divine character and His high and holy mission; the shepherds hasten to worship Him and offer the choicest fatlings of their flocks, and they turn away from His crib to proclaim His presence and tell the wonderful things they had seen and learned of Him! From distant lands come the wise and powerful of the earth to adore Him, and by their gifts acknowledge His threefold characters of

#### GOD, KING AND MAN.

But pursuing the history of His life, we find His own people ignoring Him, and the usurper Herod seeking his life. He is driven into exile, and returns to His own country only to suffer relentless persecutions, the most shameful ingratitude, the most unjust censure, and finally to be rewarded with death for having led the most exemplary life, for having performed the most heroic deeds of charity and works, such as man had never done before!

This assertion is substantiated by the testimony of the pagan Pilate, who condemned Him to death while he protested that he could find no cause in Him. It is still further justified by the admissions of His modern enemies, notable amongst whom, Mr. Renau, says: "Jesus is for humanity an inexhaustible principle of regeneration. Every one of us owes Him the best of

what is in us. Jesus is without equal. His glory remains entire, and will be eternally renewed. Jesus is the common honor of whoever bears a human heart. Without Him the whole history is incomprehensible!"

Admitting then that we have found in the manger the Messiah—Him that was to be sent, the expectation of the nations—Christ the Prince, the Son of God, "of whose kingdom there shall be no end," we must also admit that He came to establish, and really did establish, such a kingdom, which He designated, and men have agreed in calling His church. This church is the abiding manifestations of the Incarnation. It is the perpetuation of the life work of Christ for the purpose of bringing men into the way of salvation. "It is His city, His kingdom, His empire." It is His (mystical) body, and the spouse of the Holy Ghost, who is its abiding principle of supernatural life. As the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, and has all the divine attributes in common with them, so the church, His spouse, is the offspring of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ.

Hence the church, though visibly composed of men, is not merely human, but partakes of the double nature of Christ, and, like Him, is at once divine and human. It is strong in the midst of meekness; it is holy in the midst of sin; it is subject to growth and decay, and is yet imperishable.

The organization of the church had its origin in the obscure cave of Bethlehem, where it clustered itself around its first visible head, Christ, the Lord; and here comes before us the beginning of the second part of the historic panorama we are studying, and which will be completed only with the end of time. And who can deny that the organization was a perfect one, and in it was shown forth as in a prophecy the future triumphs and vicissitudes of the church